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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000134

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SUBJECT: U/S BURNS' LUNCH WITH TURKISH MFA U/S APAKAN

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: U/S for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns and Turkish MFA U/S Ertugrul Apakan exchanged views on Afghanistan, Kosovo, Cyprus, the Halki Seminary, the possibility of an Armenian genocide resolution in the US Congress, and Central Asia at a working lunch January 19 that followed a meeting that dealt mainly with Iraq and Iran (septel). U/S Burns invited Apakan to Washington this spring for the next discussion of the Strategic Dialogue. END SUMMARY

Afghanistan

12. (C) U/S Burns reviewed U.S. thinking on Afghanistan and our concern that NATO have more resources, including Turkey's, in 2007 and 2008. At the Brussels NATO ministerial, Secretary Rice would make four points: 1) NATO needs to increase the number of troops; 2) all national caveats must be removed; 3) NATO needs to be more present and effective in counternarcotics; and 4) all need to increase contributions for civilian reconstruction. NATO must move out of its defensive stance to take a tougher posture against the Taliban. The size and effectiveness of Turkey's military make this country one of the few that can provide the help that's necessary.

13. (C) Apakan listed Turkey's contributions -- its \$100 million reconstruction assistance effort (of which \$21-22 million has been put into projects), U.S. and ISAF use of Incirlik airbase, taking command of the Kabul center region this May, and another troop increase this past year, in addition to having twice commanded ISAF. Regarding additional troops, he argued it would be very difficult for Turkey to give a positive response at this stage, particularly in light of Turkey's Lebanon deployment and the parliamentary/public controversy over it, as well as Turkey's own PKK terrorism problem. Despite Turkey's existing caveats, Apakan personally did not believe that Turkish troops would sit idle in barracks, should nearby ISAF troops under attack need emergency assistance. He also suggested that there needs to be more NATO-Pakistan dialogue regarding

the border and counternarcotics efforts. Burns welcomed this and suggested Turkey talk with the Pakistanis.

Kosovo

14. (C) U/S Burns outlined the expected unfolding of events under the Ahtisaari process for Kosovo. Shortly after the Serb elections, Ahtisaari will give his proposal to Belgrade and Pristina. He will negotiate with them for 30-40 days and then go public with his plan. There will be a huge fight in the UNSC, but the U.S. will propose that UNSCR 1244 be replaced with a new measure. A day or two after it passes, Kosovo would declare independence, and the U.S. would immediately recognize it. Russia is a key factor, and it's necessary that Europe and the U.S. hang together to manage the Russians and ensure Kosovo independence emerges from this process. Kosovo's would be a supervised independence and KFOR would need to remain for a couple of years. UN membership should help nurture the infant state. Apakan responded that Turkey agreed with the US position. He would talk with his colleagues on Kosovo, and the MFA would stay in touch with the Embassy coming weeks on the matter.

Cyprus: Requests UNSYG take bold action

15. (C) Apakan suggested that new UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon look at reasons why the Annan Plan for Cyprus had failed. In his view, it resulted from a failure to empower the Turkish Cypriots. More work to de-isolate the Turkish Cypriots would be helpful. Apakan expressed frustration that UNSYG Annan's 2004 report on the matter still had not been

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taken up by the UNSC. Apakan requested that the U.S. ask Ban to take bold steps. U/S Burns responded that the U.S. shared the view that we must continue momentum toward a settlement. He cautioned that Ban was still settling in but we are urging him to continue the UN effort. He said we will do what we can on de-isolating the Turkish Cypriots, but there would be limits to what the U.S. could do as we recognize officially only one government in Cyprus.

Turkey/Greece

16. (C) U/S Burns urged that Ankara continue to work on strengthening Turkish-Greek relations. He noted PM Erdogan's hope that Greek PM Karamanlis would visit in the spring, adding that the US continues to encourage the Greeks to reach out to Turkey. Progress to reopen the Halki seminary could facilitate action by Greece on the Muslims in western Thrace. Apakan noted that Turkish-Greek relations had improved steadily; there were now some 30 bilateral agreements covering all aspects of the relationship. Greek banks were investing in Turkey and trade was up; interdependence was growing.

17. (C) With regard to Halki, Apakan said the Turks could not ignore the situation in western Thrace. And, there are legal problems. Theoretically it is possible for a foundation to open a religious school. The Armenian Patriarchate was currently exploring with the government an arrangement that would put its schools under the umbrella of Istanbul University. Students would study at Armenian religious schools and complete a few other courses at Istanbul University, but would not have to pursue the bulk of their studies there. They would get a degree from both institutions. If the Greek Patriarchate would agree to an approach like this, then perhaps Halki could be reopened. U/S Burns said this kind of resolution will not be acceptable to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and he urged more creative thinking to resolve the matter, which is important to Congress and the Executive Branch. Ambassador added that making the Armenians' arrangement work might lead to

reconsideration by the Greek Orthodox of a similar arrangement for Halki.

Genocide Resolution: Serious disruption on the horizon

18. (C) Apakan referred to the French and Canadian legislation/statements on the Armenian "genocide." Both had been damaging; they were now slowly starting to repair both relationships. A resolution by the US Congress would be even more damaging. During this election year in Turkey, the GOT could work as hard as it wanted but would not be able to contain public outrage. DG Guven pointed to the previous evening's debate in parliament on Turkey's foreign policy, where the opposition had accused the government of not being sufficiently robust in its reactions to countries that had passed related measures. Apakan added that a Congressional resolution would also set back Turkish efforts to work quietly toward reconciliation with Armenia. He asked for strong presidential intervention to prevent passage.

19. (C) U/S Burns assured Apakan that the Administration would strongly oppose any Armenia resolution, but warned that it may pass despite this. He urged that Turkey consider measures that would address its relationship with Armenia and move toward normalization. Members of Congress had suggested that perhaps Turkey could make a statement regarding the events of 1915-1916 and the many, many Armenians who were killed at that time. He also suggested that Foreign Minister Gul make good use of his upcoming trip to Washington to convey Turkey's views to Congressional leaders on this issue.

Central Asia

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110. (C) U/S Burns proposed that both countries could work more closely in Central Asia. There may be an opening in Turkmenistan now following the death of Niyazov. We have active relations with the other Central Asian countries, except Uzbekistan. He suggested that we intensify our dialogue about the region. Apakan agreed. He said that our countries should work to give the Central Asians a vision for their integration into the international community. Turkey wants to strengthen NATO's engagement with the Central Asians, which U/S Burns welcomed.

111. (U) This cable has been cleared by U/S Burns. BELGRADE MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

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WILSON